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UNCLAS CAIRO 007889

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

FROM REGIONAL REFUGEE COORDINATOR  
DEPT FOR PRM/AFR MARY LANGE, PRM/MCE, PRM/A WHITNEY REITZ,  
NEA/MAG  
GENEVA FOR RMA  
ROME FOR FODAG  
USEU FOR MEZNAR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [AL](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: SAHRAWI: FOOD CRUNCH IN TINDOUF

Reference: Cairo 7582

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Summary  
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1. (SBU) The Algerian Red Crescent has apparently refused to accept the joint World Food Program/UNHCR decision to cut back from 158,000 to 90,000 WFP's assessment of refugees requiring food aid in the Tindouf camps. Despite WFP's announcement that the cutback would take effect from October 1, the Algerians have removed supplies sufficient for 158,000 from the WFP/UNHCR storage area in Tindouf. WFP will meet with the GOA on October 24 to try to resolve the issue. WFP is determined to restrict its November allocations from Rabouni to food sufficient for only 22,000. End Summary.

2. (SBU) RefCoord met October 13 with Amir Abdulla, Regional Director of the World Food Program (WFP) in Cairo to review the situation in Tindouf following the joint decision by WFP and UNHCR to cut back from 158,000 to 90,000 the official assessment of vulnerable Sahrawi requiring food aid in the Tindouf camps and to reduce food distribution to the refugees accordingly. Abdulla and the Director of UNHCR's CASWANAME Bureau, Menemcioglu, were joint signatories to the letter to the Algerians announcing the cutback, which was to have taken effect on September 1. As reported in reftel this was postponed until October 1 in response to Sahrawi protests and requests for additional time to adjust to the new regimen.

3. (SBU) According to Abdulla WFP advised the Algerians that the cutback would take effect on October 1. However as noted in reftel, WFP has no control of food distribution to the Sahrawi camps after it arrives at the warehouse area in Rabouni. UNHCR, which technically controls secondary food distribution, has surrendered control to the Sahrawi Red Crescent (CRS), which is part of the Algerian Red Crescent (CRA).

4. (SBU) WFP was alarmed to hear earlier this week that the Algerians have refused to accept the new figure of 90,000 and have instead, unilaterally, taken sufficient supplies from Rabouni to feed 158,000. According to Abdulla, when WFP protested to the Algerians, it was told that WFP had no standing in the matter since WFP effectively relinquished control to UNHCR after the food reached Rabouni. WFP is determined not to buckle and is apparently under pressure from the Europeans - the principal donors to the Tindouf program - not to do so. Abdulla is scheduled to meet with the Algerians in Algiers on October 24. At that time WFP will advise the GOA that the November food allocation will be sufficient for only 22,000 a reduction of 68,000 to take account of the extra supplies appropriated by the Algerians for October.

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